

Corvus  
Publications

# THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN:

## A Commitment Renewed

CATON  
RD  
-ZOOI



3 1761 12060964 9

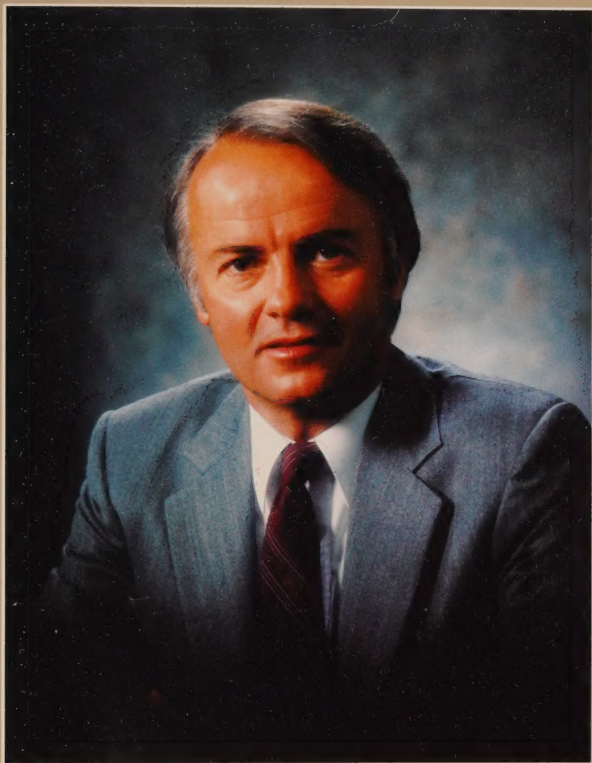




# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Hon. Norman W. Sterling, Q.C.

Provincial Secretary for Resources Development



The Niagara Escarpment is a unique feature of beauty in the Province of Ontario. Essentially, it includes a strip of land 725 kilometres in length running from Queenston Heights to Tobermory. The landscape is characterized by unique geological forms of



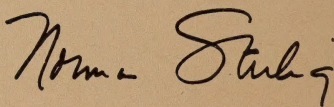
rock, rivers, forests, valleys and prime agricultural land. As such, it is probably one of the most striking landscapes in our country.

Its segments of rugged beauty make the Escarpment a favorite spot for many of us. The Bruce Trail, for example, has done much to focus attention on the need for its preservation.

To ensure the preservation of this most valuable natural asset, the Ontario Government decided 10 years ago to appoint a Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Commission, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ivor McMullin, was responsible for ensuring that all development along the Escarpment was consistent with this Government's commitment to its protection. The Niagara Escarpment Commission was also responsible for the preparation of a proposed plan, upon which my recommendations have in part been based.

I have also taken into account the Hearing Officer's Report which is the result of 26 months of public hearings.

Although this pamphlet is just a brief overview, I hope that it will whet your appetite and serve as an encouragement for all Ontarians to continue to take an active part in the conservation of our natural heritage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Norman Sterling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Norman" is written in a more compact, rounded script, while "Sterling" is written with more elongated, connected letters. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Hon. Norman W. Sterling, Q.C.  
Provincial Secretary

# CONTENTS

## SECTION **ONE**

The Niagara Escarpment Plan

What is it?

Can I participate?

## SECTION **TWO**

Development Control: A Delicate Balance

Why?

How was this achieved?

How will the process now change?

Recommendation

How will this affect me?

## SECTION **THREE**

What then will be the future role of the  
Commission?

## SECTION **FOUR**

Niagara Escarpment Parks System

## SECTION **FIVE**

Preserving for future generations

# THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN

## What is it?

The Niagara Escarpment Plan establishes objectives and policies for the use of land along the Niagara Escarpment.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan covers an area of approximately 1,820 square-kilometres and is the culmination of a 10-year planning process which has included the preparation of three previous planning documents:

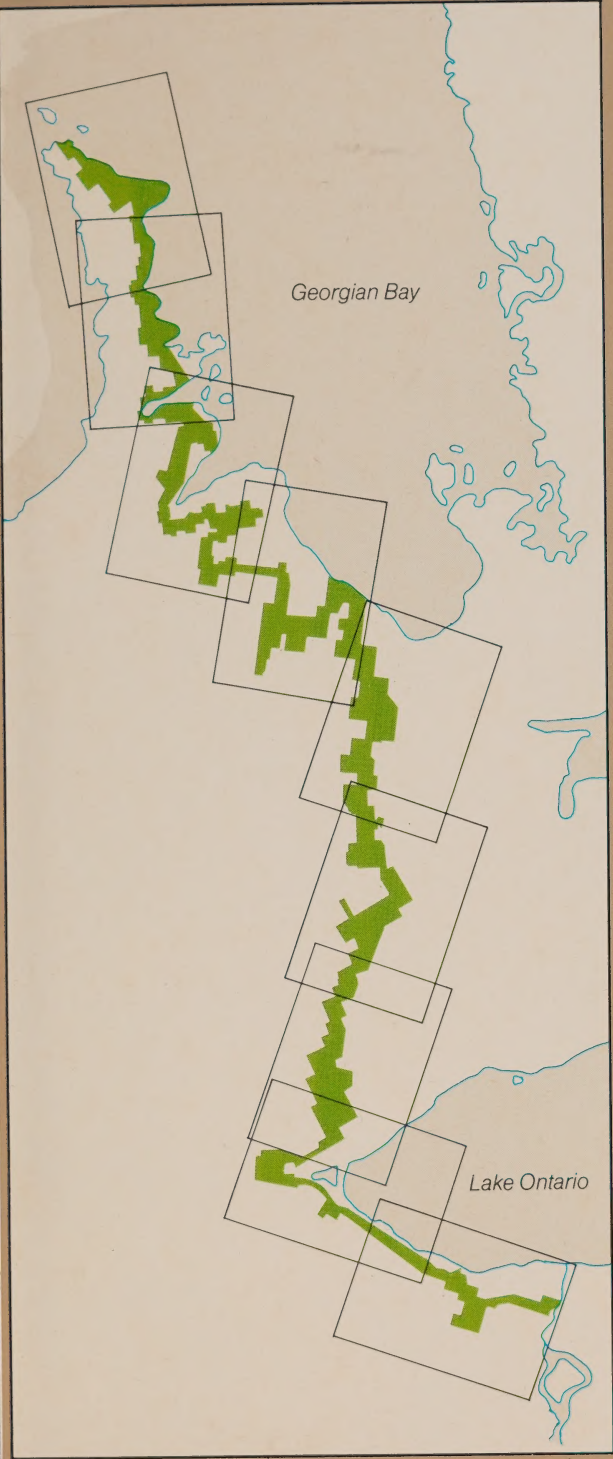
1. The Proposed Plan for the Niagara Escarpment, 1979.
2. The Report of the Hearing Officers January, 1983.
3. The Final Proposed Plan for the Niagara Escarpment June, 1983.

In the summer of 1984, the Honourable N.W. Sterling, Provincial Secretary for Resources Development, released his own recommendations based on the above reports.

When approved by Cabinet, the Plan will form the basis of planning decisions by provincial agencies and municipal governments throughout the area.

*The rectangles (shown at right) represent land use maps accompanying the Provincial Secretary's recommendations*





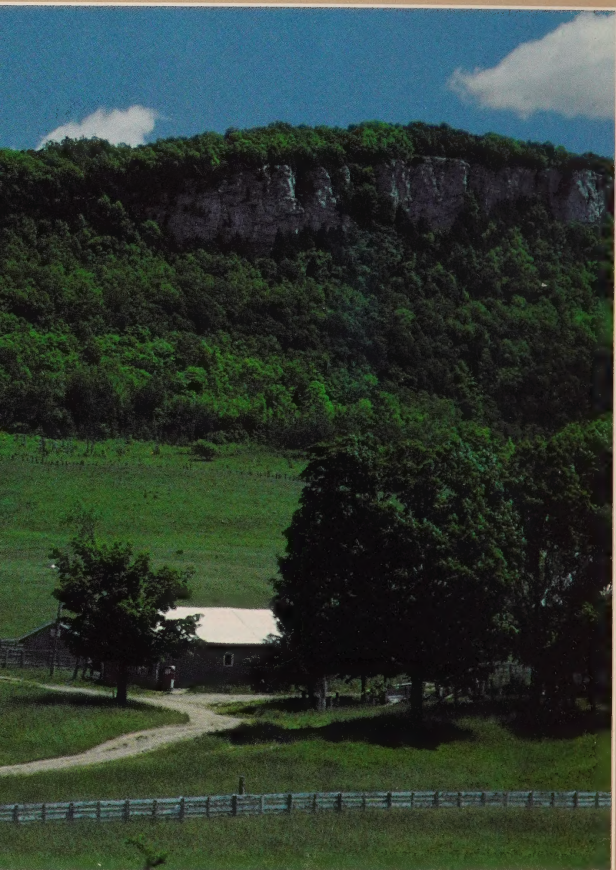
Georgian Bay

Lake Ontario

## Can I participate?

By all means! The Niagara Escarpment is to be enjoyed by all. Its preservation is everyone's responsibility. Any comments you may have will be appreciated and taken into account when future planning decisions are made.

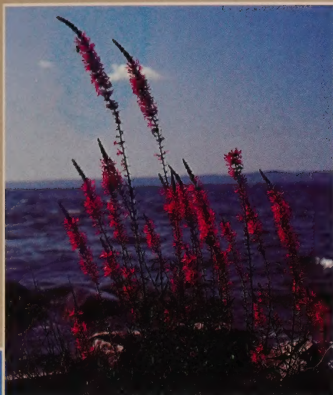
Because the following pages are only a brief overview of what is recommended for the Niagara Escarpment Plan, you may



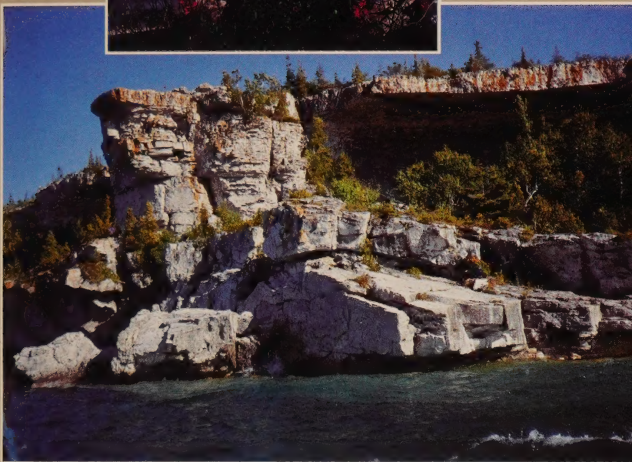
*"Old Baldy", Kimberley in Grey County*



KATHLEEN WOOD



*Purple Loosestrife,  
Georgian Bay  
Shoreline*



*South of Tobermory*

wish to have a look at the complete set of recommendations. This can be seen at most municipal offices and public libraries along the Escarpment. Copies may also be purchased at a cost of \$10, and are obtainable through:

Telephone (416) 965-6015

Toll free long distance

1-800-268-7540

Northwestern Ontario

Dial Operator and ask for Zenith 67200

Cheques payable to the Treasurer of Ontario

# DEVELOPMENT CONTROL: A Delicate Balance

During the past 10 years, the preservation of the Niagara Escarpment has been achieved by a unique method of development control administered by the *Provincially* appointed Niagara Escarpment Commission. This is in contrast to the regular municipal planning process, which generally falls under *local government*.

Harbour at Tobermory, Bruce County  
Eugenia Falls at Eugenia, Grey County



KATHLEEN WOOD



KATHLEEN WOOD

## Why?

As the Escarpment area stretches across the boundaries of 44 municipalities, it became apparent that a separate coordinating body was needed to ensure that similar development and planning procedures were practised along the length of the Escarpment.

## How was this achieved?

In 1973, the *Niagara Escarpment Commission* was formed. Essentially the 17 members were faced with the mandate of:

1. Preparation of a proposed plan for the Escarpment area.
2. During this period of preparation, the Niagara Escarpment Commission administered a system of land use regulation, thereby ensuring that all development within the area of the plan reflected Ontario's commitment to its preservation as a unique environment.

## How will the process now change?

Generally, municipalities have heeded the objectives established by the Government in 1973. For the most part, it has become evident that local governments have approached development along the Scarp in a cautious and responsible manner.



## Recommendation

It is recommended that the administration of development applications be delegated progressively to the lower-tier municipalities in the area of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. A monitoring process will be established to permit the Provincial interest in the Escarpment to be maintained.

Initially, administration of the development permit system will be delegated to those upper-tier municipalities which express desire and ability to assume responsibility for those lands in their region which are affected by the Escarpment.

This will be done under *current legislation*.

Subsequently, a site-plan control system will be established and based on local Official Plans and zoning bylaws.

These plans must first, however, be brought into conformity with the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

*New legislation* will be developed to implement these goals and to ensure that a monitoring process is established.



KATHLEEN WOOD

## How will this affect me?

Basically, what we have tried to do is develop a system which will provide land-owners with a less centralized process, but which will still ensure the Escarpment is protected.

By delegating the administration of development control away from the Niagara Escarpment Commission, individual land-owners will have a more direct route and will be able to go in most cases to their local municipal office to find out, for example, whether they can build an addition to their home; create a new lot; or expand an agricultural operation.



*Georgian Bay near Tobermory, Bruce County*

# WHAT THEN WILL BE THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION?

The Commission will continue to be very active as its primary mandate will be to safeguard the government's commitment to preserve the Niagara Escarpment for the enjoyment of future generations.

*Specifically, the Niagara Escarpment Commission will:*

*Promote* the objectives of the Plan.

*Advise* municipalities on proposed amendments to implement the Plan.

*Monitor* development permits and site plan agreements once delegated to municipalities.

*Intervene* at hearings on development applications if plan objectives and policies are threatened.



# NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PARKS SYSTEM

As part of the Ontario Government's commitment to protecting the Niagara Escarpment, a major proposal in the Provincial Secretary's Plan is the establishment of a Niagara Escarpment Parks System under the coordination of the Ministry of Natural Resources.



*Comfort Maple, Fonthill Region of Niagara*

It is recommended that the system include the development of 10 *principal parks* at strategic points along the Escarpment. It is also intended that *The Bruce Trail* will provide a natural link between these parks.

In these parks, special emphasis will be placed on information sharing with the public. In addition, steps will be taken to involve all affected communities in various activities along the Escarpment.

For further information contact:

Provincial Secretariat for  
Resources Development  
Room 1620, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A2

The protection of the Niagara Escarpment is a team effort. In decades to come its preservation will depend on an approach which encourages greater public involvement and your participation.

*Escarpment Rock Formation, Flowerpot Island, North of Tobermory*









Provincial  
Secretariat for  
Resources Development

Hon. Norman W. Sterling, Q.C.  
Provincial Secretary  
Don Stevenson  
Deputy Provincial Secretary

ISBN 0-7743-9508-7